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Reverse 911 legislation introduced by Sen. Gilbert

LANSING – A 911 service district would be able to notify local residents of impending danger using a telephone emergency notification system under legislation introduced this week by Sen. Jud Gilbert, R-Algonac.

Referred to as a “Reverse 911” system, emergency service responders would use telephone numbers supplied by a service supplier to contact residents regarding an imminent danger or emergency that may affect their health, safety or welfare.

A local 911 agency would be able to program the numbers into an automatic dialer that would reach many customers at one time.

“The public relies on local officials to warn them of safety hazards, and this would be another way for this to happen,” Gilbert said. “Setting up this system would provide a quick, efficient way to notify hundreds of residents at once if need be. A resident doesn’t always have a television or radio on to hear an announcement, but they most likely would answer the phone.”

Senate Bill 1267 would require telecommunications providers to supply all 911 service districts within their coverage areas with telephone number data, including all listed, unlisted and unpublished numbers, for each customer within the district. Currently, not all service providers do this.

The legislation also would allow a telecommunications provider to be reimbursed for providing the required data.

Penalties would be implemented to safeguard against improper usage of provided telephone numbers and other data, such as the names and addresses of customers.

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